

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

Memorandum of Conversation

Approved in S 6/8/62

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DATE: May 31, 1962

SUBJECT: Meeting of Committee of Principals, May 31, 1962

PARTICIPANTS: See attached list

COPIES TO: list attached

The Secretary asked Mr. Foster to outline the issues before the Committee.

Mr. Foster noted that seven issues were being presented to the Committee for decision and two additional issues for discussion. He regarded the most important issues for decision as those concerned with the possibility of reducing military bases in Stage I; the question of a criterion for measuring "destructive capability" and application of the criterion to additional categories of armaments; and the problem of relating retained armaments to agreed force levels. Remaining matters for decision were concerned with the initiation of certain studies.

The Committee then turned to the discussion of specific issues.

1. Military Bases.

In response to a question by the Secretary regarding the extent of discussion of the bases problem at Geneva, Mr. Foster stated that this question had been discussed as much as any other

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single issue. As in past disarmament discussions, the Soviet Union has maintained that it is surrounded by U.S. "foreign" bases. The issue is particularly acute in present negotiations since, in view of our proposed 30 percent reduction of armaments and substantial reduction of armed forces, we probably would not need all bases. In view of other Stage I reductions, the non-aligned countries believe that bases should also be reduced. The ACDA recommendation is designed to blunt the Soviet attack on foreign bases by continuing our present position that no distinction can be made between foreign and domestic bases but opening the possibility of some reduction in bases both by the United States and the Soviet Union in Stage I. The Delegation believes it can defend this position.

The Secretary recalled that our foreign bases came into existence because of post-war Soviet pressures. These pressures produced not only bases but military alliances as well. If we placed ourselves in a situation where we could not bring support to our allies, we would confer military advantage on the Soviet Union. We have to maintain our capability to project our forces to the Eurasian land mass. A particular base may be regarded as crucial by certain allies. Therefore, it is difficult to discuss bases in general, and we will need to examine the problem in terms of specific bases.

The Secretary thought, however, that there were certain things that might be said about bases during the negotiations. We could call attention to the fact that we are in the process of eliminating some bases. Morocco and Dhahran, or other examples, might be cited, as appropriate. Moreover, some discussion of bases will be necessary in connection with surprise attack measures. But before we could agree to a formula for reduction of bases in general, we will have to look at bases one by one. Unless we can find some we would be willing to give up, we cannot agree to a reduction.

Mr. McNamara agreed that it would be all right to discuss actions we were already taking to reduce bases. However, he was reluctant to encourage discussion of the possibility of reducing

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bases in Stage I. He believed that the matter should be studied in relation to conditions that would exist in Stage I. What we might require in the way of bases may not vary directly with reductions of armaments and armed forces. For example, we might want even more dispersion of nuclear delivery vehicles, and our capability to project our forces might require a shifting rather than a reduction of bases. Moreover, there are problems of definition. We have some 6,700 installations we call "bases", 4,500 in the United States and 2,200 abroad. These range from listening posts to elaborate installations for B-47's.

The Secretary asked whether there should not be a cut-off point for the study of bases and suggested use of a restrictive definition which would limit the study to consideration of bases where combat forces are located.

Mr. Foster thought that the present study could be limited in this manner. With respect to the broader issue, he said that although he agreed with much that the Secretary and Mr. McNamara had said, he thought that as we built more hardened missile sites and POLARIS submarines, we would probably reduce bases, such as those for B-47's. We ought to take advantage of this circumstance in the negotiations. He believed we could protect essential bases better by considering all bases together rather than by allowing the Soviet Union to single out foreign bases.

The Secretary expressed the view that if we could reach agreement on an otherwise satisfactory Stage I, we might consider a Stage I reduction of bases. But with the Soviet Union taking a rigid attitude on inspection and other issues, there did not seem to be much point in going through the agony of trying to reach agreement on bases. There are so many obstacles in the way of agreement, we ought to get some of the others out of the way first. He called attention to the Soviet Union's reversal of its decision on the proposed declaration on war propaganda and said that he considered this move interesting as an indication of Soviet tightening up of its relations with the Free World. He was inclined to place some stock in the report

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through the Polish representatives in Geneva that the Central Committee had overruled Gromyko in this matter in order not to show concessions to the United States at this time. He thought that we would see more pressure in other areas (Berlin and South-east Asia) as well as in disarmament.

Mr. Foster wondered whether we could not, as a matter of tactics, refer to the possibility of reduction of bases as needs change and offer the possibility that later in the negotiations we might consider doing something about bases in Stage I. Meanwhile, we should study the matter in detail.

Mr. Nitze thought there was a question as to what should be said before the study was completed.

The Secretary suggested that a page or two be prepared and cleared with the interested agencies.

Mr. McNamara agreed with the Secretary's suggestion that something be put down on paper. This might include reference to reductions already under way.

Mr. Kayser questioned the tactics of trying to take credit for reductions already planned. He thought that if it had been concluded that we should for the present reaffirm our position, we should "take the heat" and inform ourselves by study. Calling attention to reductions already under way might simply reopen the issue.

Mr. Foster did not feel that it had been decided that we were precluded from discussing reduction of bases in Stage I if real progress were made in other areas.

The Secretary thought that bases were among the last items that should be discussed. We should see if what is agreed opens up possibilities for reducing bases. There may be some such possibilities.

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Mr. McNamara agreed that there was no question that we would get rid of some bases.

The Secretary inquired whether we could get an urgent study of the bases problem. We should use a restrictive cut-off on the definition of bases and focus on installations where combat forces are located. He thought we should look at such bases from two standpoints: first, to see if even now there are some we plan to eliminate; and second, to determine the impact of other Stage I measures on the need for bases. In response to a question from General Smith regarding the status of NATO infrastructure bases, the Secretary stated that we would not necessarily call the presence of our forces on someone else's territory a determinant of a United States base.

Mr. McNamara agreed that a study of the problem should be undertaken.

2. Stage I Force Levels for the U.S. and USSR.

Mr. Foster noted that only a study had been recommended. ACDA felt that we didn't know enough about force levels of 2.1, 1.9, and 1.7 million to determine the acceptability of reductions below the proposal of 2.1 million level. We thought, however, that the 2.1 million level may have acquired a degree of undeserved sanctity. Although we were under pressure to accept a compromise at 1.9 million, we did not know whether a level of 1.9 million would enable us to meet essential requirements.

Mr. McNamara recalled that the Joint Chiefs had studied the force levels problem last summer and regarded their study as definitive. Defense was prepared to study the matter further; however, they would like to take a somewhat different approach than that suggested in the ACDA memorandum. They would like to approach the problem from the standpoint of using their imagination to find ways of maintaining at the 1.9 and 1.7 million levels the same effective combat strength that would be available at the 2.1 million level. There might be ways of doing this.

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The Secretary thought we would need very convincing reasons to support whatever level we decided to insist on. We ought to be able to distinguish clearly between levels of 2.1, 1.9, and 1.7 million in order not to go further down the slippery slope than we thought we should go. He recalled that he had been queried about this matter by certain of the Foreign Ministers in Geneva. He had offered two arguments in support of the 2.1 million level: first, we thought this figure could be accepted without the participation of Communist China; second, we thought this level would enable us to project our power to the Eurasian land mass if necessary. We will need to give as much content to our conclusions as we can.

Mr. McNamara considered it important to distinguish between two aspects of this matter: first, the implications of lower levels; second, the presentation of our conclusions. Defense was willing to study the matter.

3. Criterion for Destructive Capability and
4. Application of Destructive Capability to Other Categories.

Mr. Foster recalled that at a previous meeting with the President, ACDA had suggested that the full loaded weight of delivery vehicles seemed the simplest way to measure destructive capability. The matter was not resolved at that time. Our further analysis had not turned up any simpler criterion. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom had raised the question of extending the criterion to categories which included smaller nuclear delivery vehicles. ACDA recommended the adoption of full loaded weight as the criterion for measuring destructive capability, the application of this criterion to categories 3 and 4 as well as to categories 1 and 2, and examination of the usefulness of this criterion in the case of other categories.

Mr. Fisher added that the destructive capability criterion had lost some of its criticality in view of the decision to propose reduction by types. However, it remained important in connection with production proposals.

Mr. McNamara stated that Defense had not found any more suitable index. Full loaded weight had some limitations. The Joint Chiefs were reluctant to accept it and suggested that the

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matter be studied by an international scientific commission at a later time. Mr. McNamara, however, thought there was a close enough correlation between full loaded weight and destructive capability to meet the objective he had had in mind when he had initially suggested the importance of a destructive capability criterion. He was satisfied that we could not find a better measure and thought it should be accepted. He agreed that the criterion should be applied to smaller nuclear delivery vehicles and that its application to other categories should be studied.

5. Stage I Production Limits.

Mr. Foster noted that ACDA recommended only a study. He recalled that in discussion of the matter with the President it had been suggested that production should not be over 5% annually. In order to explain what our production proposal means, it is important now to consider whether any changes should be made in the illustrative categories of armaments and what production limitation should be proposed for each category. Study of the matter should be based on two criteria: first, ensuring capability to resume production if a disarmament agreement were terminated; and second, ensuring the availability of replacements for weapons expended in test or training. Economic implications of production limits could be considered in the light of specific proposed limitations.

Mr. McNamara agreed that study of the matter was certainly warranted.

6. Relating Armaments to Regular Armed Forces.

Mr. Foster observed that this was a highly controversial issue. There was controversy within ACDA as well as between ACDA and other agencies. On balance, ACDA had decided to recommend an approach relating retained armaments to agreed force levels. The Soviet Union had raised the matter, and ACDA believed that on balance the recommended approach would be advantageous since it offered a means of cutting the Soviet preponderance of conventional armaments. Although the Soviet

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Union might seek parity in the strategic area, they were doing this anyway, and since we do not have strategic vehicles for reserve forces, the present recommendation would not directly affect our strategic weapons. Even recognizing that the recommendation might hit reserve naval forces and some air defense units, ACDA felt on balance that there would be net advantage in moving toward the Soviet proposal.

The Secretary recalled that he had felt we could go ahead under Stage I because our proposal would preserve our war-making capability to the extent that would be necessary without having achieved major transformations in the world political field. There is a critical dividing line at some point. When we move from Stage I to Stage II, we'll have to know a lot more about Soviet attitudes and about means of keeping the peace. Since we are prepared to undertake Stage I in a period of normal relations, the forces we retain will have to be fully effective. In Korea we were critically limited by the state of our reserve stocks. We should not permit that kind of situation. On the other hand, if you have adequate stocks for active forces, some of these stocks might be diverted to use by reserve forces. This posed something of a dilemma.

Mr. McNamara expressed his strong opposition to adoption of the recommendation at this time. He was willing to study the matter further and try to develop a formula although he doubted that this would be possible.

Mr. Foster maintained that the basic consideration involved is that we are trying to cut down the arms race. If we're going to keep such high levels of reserve stocks, we're not cutting down very much. Active armed forces should be fully equipped, but there are finite limits to this. It was Mr. Foster's understanding that the Soviet Union had small active units which are normally flattened out and then expanded. We ought to cut their ability to expand.

Mr. McNamara pointed out that we have 960,000 men in 16 divisions. The Soviet Union has 2 million men in 147 divisions. They would want to retain full armaments for divisions which are

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now staffed only with cadres. There would have to be complex adjustments and formulae to reach agreement.

Mr. Kaysen considered the principle of simplicity to be of importance. To implement the ACDA recommendation it would be necessary to get agreement on formulae; he found it hard to see how such matters could be settled as a workable item of agreement. He understood Mr. Foster's point of view that if it were possible to reach agreement on definitions, a major step forward could be taken. However, Mr. Kaysen thought the problem of definition was so difficult, that we wouldn't know what we were buying. If we can reduce along a fairly predictable path, we feel that our security can be protected. He recalled a statement by Mr. McNamara at a previous meeting that we would rather stick with what we know. The proposal to reduce reserve armaments invites a scramble, and the outcome of such a scramble would be uncertain in the absence of a hard and fast rule.

The Secretary believed that we have proposed in Stage I some important measures of disarmament, but retained forces must be combat capable. If we have too little back-up for our forces, we are actually reducing our effective forces below the agreed level.

General Decker thought this might result from the proposal.

Mr. Foster agreed that there had to be adequate back-up for our active forces.

Mr. McNamara thought it would be a serious error to advance the proposal but expressed willingness to study it further. He then departed.

Mr. Fisher pointed out that the proposal meant that armaments retained would be related to armed forces retained. Unless we can do something about Soviet superiority in conventional armaments, they could put a large force into the field more rapidly than we. Everyone had looked at what the proposal would do to us. We ought also to look at its effects on the

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Soviet Union. To a large extent the Soviet cadre system makes the 2.1 million level fictitious. We shouldn't negotiate ourselves into a position of continual inferiority in conventional armaments.

Mr. Foster noted that our present approach might actually encourage a build-up of reserves. The Secretary asked whether arrangements could be made to ensure that no one would use the 2.1 million level to flow through a large number of forces and build up reserves. Mr. Foster and Mr. Nitze agreed that it would be important to try to prevent this.

Mr. Kaysen commented that the theory behind our plan recognizes that we would have nuclear superiority and they would have conventional superiority. Mr. Keeny believed that if we proposed parity in conventional armaments we might have to discuss parity in nuclear armaments. Mr. Fisher thought we might have to do this in any case.

Without passing judgment on whether the proposal would be advantageous or disadvantageous, Mr. McNaughton thought it important to recognize that in effect the proposal would produce an entirely new plan. Our present approach is to freeze the existing situation and shrink it. The proposal would change the whole conventional side of our approach to an effort to achieve parity. Our present approach is to shrink all armaments 30 percent. The proposal means that conventional armaments would be reduced even more. These would represent basic changes.

The Secretary expressed the view that on its face the proposal appeared advantageous to us. Mr. Nitze believed that this depended on working out satisfactory definitions. We should work out the definitions first. Mr. McNaughton recalled that Mr. McNamara had expressed willingness to grapple further with this "elusive problem".

The Secretary and Mr. Foster departed at this point. The Secretary reaffirmed his view that a "crash" study should be undertaken of the bases problem.

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7. Study of the Means of Verifying the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. Fisher noted that we had had to give up the idea of waiting until Stage I for an international examination of the problems involved in eliminating nuclear weapons, but we have not said what the timing of such a study should be. We should undertake an intra-governmental study now in order to be prepared for international study prior to the beginning of Stage I. We ought to get out of our present dilemma of saying that we can't enter into an international study because we don't know what our position is.

Mr. Kaysen thought there was nothing wrong with getting our own position clear but we should not commit ourselves on the timing of an international study.

Dr. Seaborg agreed that the matter should be studied. He thought that ACDA as well as AEC should participate in the study. Dr. Haworth believed that CIA had an interest. He noted that the problem was not a lack of information but rather that the information was negative.

Mr. Nitze expressed his view that the question of whether we should put forward the probable negative results of the study is a political question. Equipping of the UN Peace Force was involved.

Mr. Murrow wondered whether if the results looked negative, we should not make this known at an early time. Otherwise, the negotiations might appear to have been futile. Mr. Keeny pointed out, however, that the approach we were taking was to try to get hold of the problem by eliminating delivery vehicles. Mr. Kaysen thought that if we could make progress on the delivery vehicles question, the difficulties of eliminating nuclear weapons might not seem so important. There is a question as to when you should face up to a negative fact. If there are positive achievements, the negative fact may not be important.

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Mr. Fisher asked whether an intra-governmental study would be a waste of time under the circumstances. Mr. Kaysen and Dr. Seaborg both thought the study was needed. Dr. Haworth urged that meanwhile we should not permit ourselves to be nudged closer to an international study. Mr. Keeny believed that if we were forced into an international study, it should be broadened to cover the delivery vehicles question. If pressures for an international study increase, we could send knowledgeable people to Geneva. Mr. Kaysen said that we may want to head off such pressures by exposing the facts informally and explaining why we don't want an international study now.

Mr. Fisher affirmed that we were not placing emphasis on undertaking an international study now, only on doing it before a treaty is signed.

Calling attention to the two issues on the agenda for discussion purposes but not decision (the questions of transition and nuclear weapons for a UN Peace Force), Mr. Fisher noted that most of those present had attended the earlier meetings of the Deputies of the Principals when these matters had been discussed. Accordingly, it did not appear necessary to discuss these matters again.

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